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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2990
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ APR LIMA 2558
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 3500
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/06/2014
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [KTIA](#) [OVIP](#) [EC](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR HAS POSITIVE MEETING WITH NEW DEFENSE
MINISTER

REF: A. QUITO 331

[1](#)B. 07 QUITO 2064

Classified By: Ambassador Linda Jewell for Reasons 1.4 (b&d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador met with new Minister of Defense (MOD) Javier Ponce on April 18, their first meeting in his new role as MOD. Atmospherics were positive. Ponce said he favored completing a diplomatic note exchange to provide protections for temporary duty U.S. military personnel. He expressed support for continued USG-GOE military cooperation, especially in the Northern Border area, and requested to reschedule SOUTHCOM Commander Admiral Stavridis' visit to Ecuador. (End Summary)

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador met with new Minister of Defense Javier Ponce on April 18, accompanied by the DATT and Military Group Commander. Vice Minister Miguel Carvajal and Under Secretary of National Defense Jorge Pena were also present during the meeting. Ponce was cordial and relaxed, and appeared to want to maintain an open and constructive dialogue in the future.

[1](#)3. (C) The MOD expressed the desire to continue existing cooperation, without stopping anything in progress. He said that he was pursuing an assessment of the military's overall cooperation with international partners. Regarding the creation of a commission to investigate USG influence over Ecuador's military, the Ambassador said that the Embassy would be happy to cooperate with the members in any way and the MOD replied that when it was established, he would ask them to speak with the Embassy. He did not, however, raise any specific concerns with our training or suggest in the meeting that the USG had undue influence.

[1](#)4. (SBU) When the Ambassador brought up the diplomatic note on protections and immunities for temporary U.S. military personnel (Ref B), the MOD responded that he wanted to get it approved as soon as possible, and promised to call the Presidential Legal Adviser's office to move the approval along. He added that he wanted the Medical Readiness Training Exercises (MEDRETES) to continue. (Note: They are suspended until protections are in place.)

[1](#)5. (SBU) The MOD expressed the desire to reschedule the postponed visit by SOUTHCOM Commander Admiral Stavridis, and requested General Pena to get this done. Ponce also stressed the importance of continuing assistance to the Northern Border, including both security and development cooperation.

